

## Greek Art and Architecture

During ancient times, the Greeks established artistic standards that strongly influenced the later art of the Western world. The aim of Greek art was to express true ideals. To do this, the Greeks used balance, harmony, and symmetry in their art.

A major branch of Greek art was sculpture. Greek sculptors did not create realistic works, but instead made statues that reflected what they considered ideal beauty. Greek art also included pottery.

In Greek architecture, the most important type of building was the temple. The walled rooms in the center of the temple held sculptures of gods and goddesses and lavish gifts to these deities.

### INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY

**RESEARCH LINKS** For more on Greek art and architecture, go to [classzone.com](http://classzone.com)

### Nike of Samothrace ►

Discovered in 1863, the Nike (or Winged Victory) of Samothrace was probably created around 203 B.C. to honor a sea battle. Through its exaggerated features and artful portrayal of flowing drapery, the Nike conveys a sense of action and triumph. Currently, it is displayed at the Louvre Museum in Paris.



### ◀ Red and Black Pottery

Greek art also included pottery, which is known for its beauty of form and decoration. The two major types of Greek pottery are black-figure pottery (shown on the vessel) and red-figure pottery (shown on the plate). The vessel shows a scene from Greek mythology. The god Zeus, disguised as a bull, carries off a young woman named Europa. The figures on the plate demonstrate the importance of the sea and seafood in Greek culture.

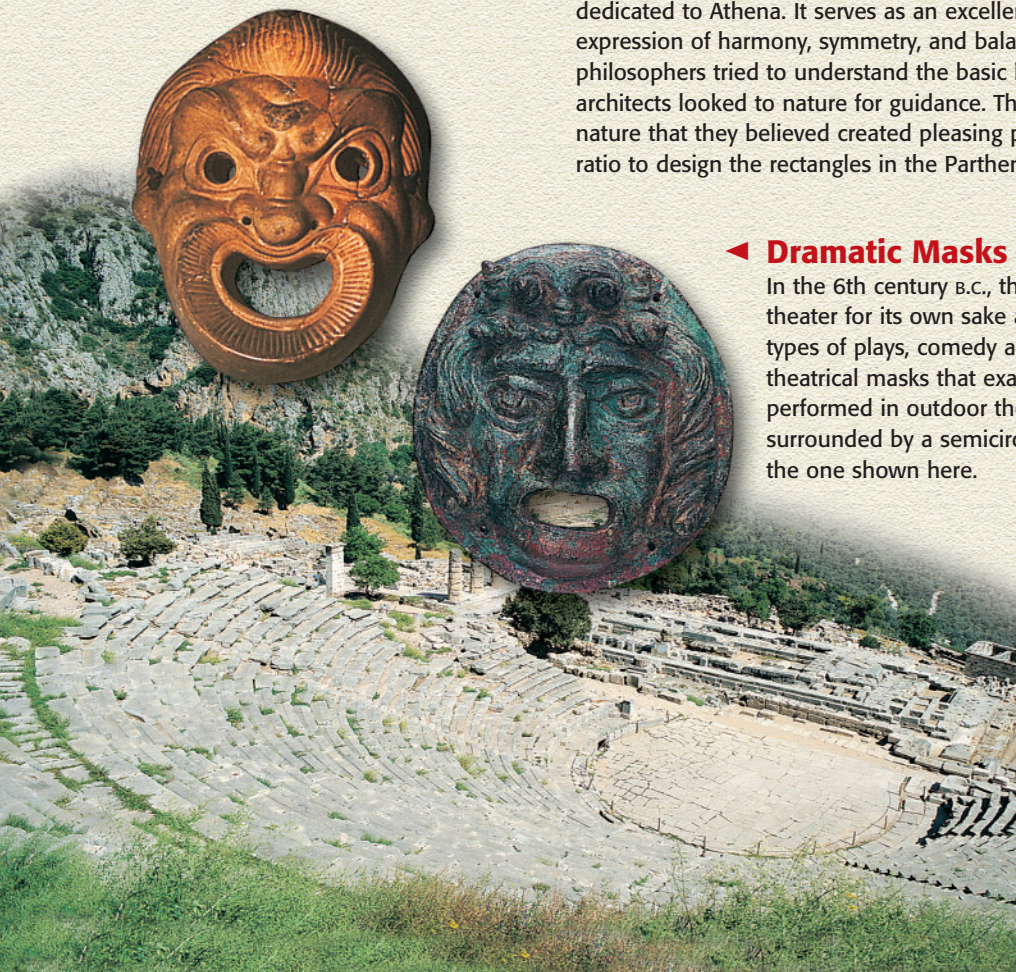


### The Parthenon ▲

Built between 447 and 432 B.C., the Parthenon was a Greek temple dedicated to Athena. It serves as an excellent example of the Greek expression of harmony, symmetry, and balance. Just as Greek philosophers tried to understand the basic laws of nature, so Greek architects looked to nature for guidance. They discovered a ratio in nature that they believed created pleasing proportions and used that ratio to design the rectangles in the Parthenon.


### ◀ Dramatic Masks and Theater

In the 6th century B.C., the Greeks became the first people to use theater for its own sake and not for religious rituals. They wrote two types of plays, comedy and tragedy. For both forms, actors wore theatrical masks that exaggerated human expressions. The plays were performed in outdoor theaters. The stage or dancing floor was partially surrounded by a semicircular seating area fitted into a hillside, such as the one shown here.



### Connect to Today

**1. Drawing Conclusions** How does the Parthenon display the Greek preference for symmetry and balance?

 See Skillbuilder Handbook, Page R11.

**2. Hypothesizing** On what does our culture today base its standards of beauty? Give examples to support your hypothesis.